The Teaching of Literature

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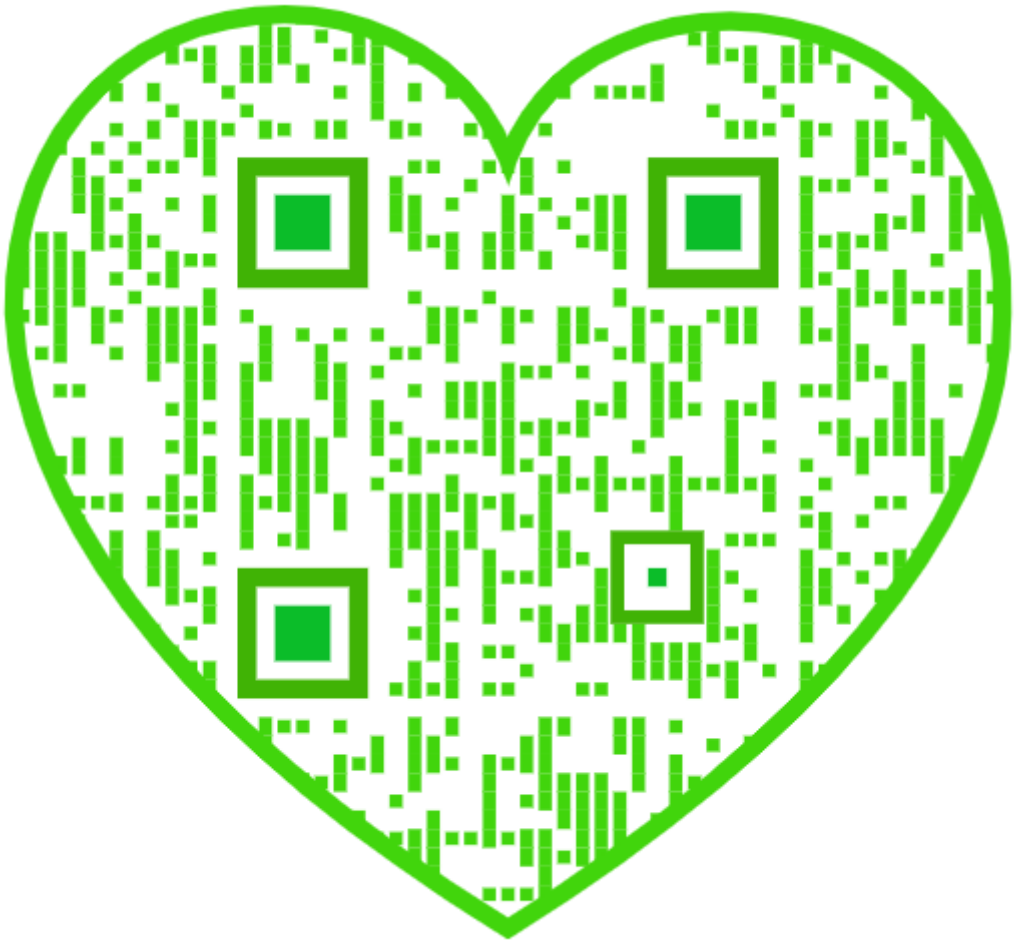

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THE TEACHING

OF

LITERATURE

BY

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To the memory of my mother

PREFACE

This book is simply an application of the principles and spirit of the course given by Prof. William H. Crawshaw of Colgate University while the author was a student in that institution. The author's only solicitude is that his great teacher shall not be charged with any of the weaknesses that may be found in this work.

To Prof. Alexander J. Inglis of Harvard University the author is indebted for much helpful advice and criticism.

Prof. R. Elliot Owens of Cortland Normal School has given most ef-

ficient help by thoroughly reviewing and criticising the whole manuscript.

The author's theories have been modified and completed by the writings of such critics as Winchester, Warsfold, Bates, Stedman, Hudson, Corson, Carlyle and Poe. Various writers on the teaching of literature have furnished indispensable suggestions. Among such writers special mention should be made of Prof. Chubb and Dr. Charles A. McMurry.

THE TEACHING OF LITERATURE

Introduction

The following outlines are not designed to be dictatorial nor inflexible, although the degree to which they are specific may seem to indicate that they are so intended. They are planned to show many things that may be done. Doubtless many other things, as for instance dramatizing, may be done to great advantage. But the helplessness with which young teachers face the necessity of teaching literature;

their frequent lack of insight, resourcefulness, and systematic methods of procedure, seem to warrant the offering of somewhat definite outlines for the preparation and teaching of a literary masterpiece. However, the outlines are given with the understanding that it is each teacher's duty ultimately to work out a method of his or her own. Naturally the resourceful teacher will vary and abbreviate these methods to suit the selection and the circumstances under which it is being taught. The outlines are to be

used only so far as they naturally apply. Do not force them.

Finally too much emphasis cannot be laid upon the following words of warning. *Thoroughness*, a word so valuable in most school work, *is the bane of teaching literature*. Do not attempt to be thorough in this work. Aim to do a few things well, but avoid being exhaustive. Do enough to convince your class of the boundless possibilities in the study of literature and then stop. Open the gate, teach them to recognize the guide posts, direct their attention to a

few of the delights by the way, and leave them with the impression that they have entered a world of unexplored beauty

CHAPTER I

Some Definitions of Literature

It is necessary that there should be no ambiguity about the kind of literature discussed in these outlines. The scheme is designed primarily for teaching fine art literature in grades six to nine inclusive. With some modifications, such as an experienced teacher or supervisor can easily make, the outlines may be made helpful in all grades from the kindergarten through the high school.

In "The Interpretation of Literature" Dean Crawshaw distinguishes four classes of writings. The third class comprises those writings that have a practical purpose and value, are permanently valuable to mankind in general, and possess in addition a certain distinction of manner and are marked by certain qualities that make them interesting independently of their thought value.

The fourth class comprises those writings that are of permanent value to mankind in general, have the requisite distinc-

tion of manner, and have as their dominant purpose and spirit, not to instruct or inform, but to move the soul by their impressiveness, beauty and power. Literature in this latter sense is defined as "the concrete embodiment of ideal beauty in human speech". "Ideal" here means that it is the product of the imagination.

The following outlines are intended primarily to apply to this fourth class of literature. But they may be helpful also in teaching such masterpieces as Burke's Orations and Lincoln's "Gettysburg Ad-

dress", which should be classed in Dean Crawshaw's third division because of their practical purposes.

It is most helpful to the teacher, however, to think of *literature as an inspirational interpretation of life* through the medium of written language, as this indicates what should be the dominant aim of the teacher. She should teach literature in such a way that the children will feel its inspiration. Some say that the distinguishing aim of literature is to amuse or entertain. These words are too small, they imply something

superficial and transient. Mark Twain does more than amuse. He stimulates an abiding attitude toward life. *Inspire* is the word. The aim is to give such fullness of motive that even drudgery shall have a certain thrill.

Nothing more fundamental or more far reaching can be done in the training of citizens than to establish in them an abiding conviction that life is well worth living and to stimulate a passion for getting the most out of it. This is the province of the teacher of literature. Other teachers

must train them in arts of living in a physical world and help them to verify the ideals derived from literature. No citizen is equipped for success without the two kinds of training.

Matthew Arnold says that the poet answers the question, how should we live. No! He is not primarily concerned with this. The attempt to make the poet answer this question has been the fatal error of many teachers. The function of the *scientist* is to answer the question, *what is life*? The function of the *artist*,

whether poet, painter, or musician, is to answer the question, *what is life worth*? The function of the *preacher*, teacher, and judge is to answer the question, *how should we live*? Bryant says, "So live, etc.", but what he says is altogether a passionate expression of the love of life. It is not a rule of action.

For other definitions see the following:

Worsfold—The Principles of Criticism, page 158. Longmans

Winchester—Principles of Literary Criticism, pages 38-41. MacMillan

CHAPTER II

ANALYZING A LITERARY MASTERPIECE PREPARATORY TO TEACHING IT

A. Content Elements

I *The Thought Element*

1. What is the main theme or central thought?
2. Outline the whole thought movement.

II *The Emotional Element*

1. What is the dominant emotional element?

2. What minor emotional elements are involved?

3. Regarding the interplay of emotions:

   a. In any one character what is the

      (1) relation of minor to dominant emotional elements?

      (2) interrelation of minor emotional elements?

   b. In different characters what are the

      (1) contrasted emotional elements?

(2) supplementary emotional elements?

4. Trace the development of emotional elements.

5. Indicate the effects of the emotional elements.

6. What is the relation of the emotional elements

a. to the author's personality?

b. to other personalities?

III *The Imaginative Element.*

1. What are the major elements of imagination—the whole vision in the perspective?

2. What are the minor elements of imagination?
3. What is the relation between the minor and the major imaginative elements?
4. What is the relation of the minor imaginative elements to the major imaginative elements?
5. What is the relation between the imaginative and the thought elements?
6. What is the relation between the imaginative and the emotional elements?

7. What are the elements of productive (constructive) imagination?

8. What are the elements of associative imagination—the association of objects, ideas, or experiences emotionally akin?

   Example—Shelley's Skylark, l. 31-60.

9. What are the elements of penetrative (interpretative) imagination—transporting the reader from his own point of view to that of some other object or creature from which point of view the reader gets a more

sympathetic understanding of the object and a more penetrative insight into its nature and circumstances?

Examples: Shelley's Skylark, l. 14-15

"Now thou's turned out,
for a' thy trouble,
But house or hald,
To thole the winter's sleety
dribble
An crancreuch cauld!" Burns

10. What abstract or elusive qualities are forced into consciousness in such

a way as to command exclusive attention?

Example:

"*Gladness* of woods, skies, waters, all in one." Lowell.

"*Bright flower*! for by that name at last,
When all my reveries are past,
I call thee and to that cleave fast,
Sweet, silent creature!"

Wordsworth

11. What are the relations between imaginative (fictional) and real (fact) elements?

IV *The Aesthetic Elements.*

1. What are the major aesthetic elements?
2. What are the minor aesthetic elements?
3. Are any of these contrasted or supplementary?
4. To what extent is the appeal of the aesthetic elements to the physical, intellectual or spiritual nature?
5. Is any unpleasant element found?

B Form Elements

I *Style.*

1. Intellectual qualities.

   a. Are there errors of grammar, rhetoric or spelling? Are there artistic reasons for these?

   b. Is the language clear?

   c. Is the language simple?

   d. Are these qualities most prominent in thought passages?

2. Emotional qualities

   a. Are the words chosen and arranged to express strong feelings, impulses, determination, or conviction?

b. Is the language in any way especially adapted to expressing melancholy, pity, grief, or despair?

c. Is there anything in the style which makes it humorous?

3. Imaginative qualities

a. Is the language especially adapted to making an intense or vivid appeal to the senses?

b. Is it intended to interpret facts or give the secrets of life and nature by making appeals to

subtle associations of thought and feeling, transporting the reader to a new point of view, or stimulating a powerful focusing of attention on elusive or abstract qualities of some object or situation? What are the peculiarities of language by which these things are accomplished?

4. Aesthetic qualities.

a. What passages have an especially pleasing succession of vowel and consonant sounds? Does this

help to make the substance appeal to the aesthetic sense?

b. Are the selection and arrangement of words intended to accomplish an adaptation of sound to sense? Example: "The Bells" by Poe.

c. Is there anything in the style whereby it is especially appropriate to "the writer, the subject, the occasion, the sensibilities of the reader," etc.

II *Metre*

1. Its relation to the content.

III *Structure*

1. Its value in suggesting the framework of the content.

C Arrangement and Relationship of Parts

I *Contrast and variety*

1. In form.
2. In content.
3. Their artistic value.

II *Is there a climax or are there several climaxes, summaries or denouments?*

1. Their effects upon the content elements.

2. How much do they assist us in appreciating and interpreting the content?

3. Their effects upon the elements of form.

III *Unity*

1. In thought—logical sequence.

2. In emotional element.

a. Are the characters consistent in their emotional natures and development?

b. Are the intensity and kinds of emotion in keeping with the

objects, thoughts or situtations which excite them?

c. Are the effects of the emotions in determining conduct or destiny of character adequate and natural?

3. In the imaginative element.

a. Are the various groups of characters and elements of plot woven together in a natural way?

b. Are the descriptive backgrounds in keeping with the actions, events, or objects which make up the center of attractions?

4. Unity in the aesthetic element.

   a. Are the kinds and degrees of beauty in the characters, objects, plot, emotions, thought, etc., consistent with themselves and with each other and are they properly sustained?

5. Unity in the interrelation between the various elements of content and form.

   a. What relation between the nature of the country described and the people who live in it?

b. What relation between the physical, spiritual, and intellectual elements of the characters? Are they consistent?

c. Is the outcome of the plot consistent with the relative powers, and prominence of the characters and other forces in the masterpiece?

d. Is the framework of the thought consistent with the development and outcome of the plot?

e. Are the thoughts, emotions, actions, and events properly related

as to cause and effect? Do they contribute harmoniously to the complete result?

f. Is the form appropriate to the content?

6. Unity in contrast and variety.

a. Do these qualities as found in the elements of form and content tend to divert and scatter attention or to centralize it?

7. Unity in climax and close of masterpiece.

a. Is the movement toward a climax

and close of the masterpiece properly progressive? Any unnecessary delays or interruptions?

b. Does the closing of the masterpiece adequately dispose of all elements?

That the teacher should regard the unity of a literary masterpiece when she teaches it, is vital to her success. Many, many failures are made because the teacher does not do this. For instance in teaching Burns's poem "To a Mouse" a teacher should interest a class in the author's life

on the farm. But to add to this a dissertation on his vices and his life in Edinborough will be nearly fatal to success. In teaching the "Cotter's Saturday Night," the author's boyhood should be discussed, but to bring in his disloyalty to his own wife and children would hopelessly counteract all efforts to achieve desired results. The same kind of error is often made by indulging in long pedantic discussions of allusions which might be explained in a sentence. It is an easy thing to over-develop or emphasize a minor thought or imaginative pro-

duct and fail properly to magnify more important elements. In mathematics or science such a blunder may be repaired; but literature is peculiar in that a serious error of that kind can seldom be remedied until several years later.

D Kinds of Literature*

	Narative	Subjective	Dramatic	Descriptive
Poetry	Epic	Lyric	Drama	Descriptive Poetry
Prose	Romance	Essay	Novel	Descriptive Prose

In narrative everything is subordinate to a thrilling or interesting series of related

*From Prof. Crawshaw's Interpretation of Literature.

events. These events have in them the spirit of the time, place, and institutions which they represent or interpret.

In subjective literature, the author expresses his own thoughts and feelings directly, and his character and life become a very essential part of the real element.

In dramatic literature, the dominant aim is to set forth a section of human life and let it reveal itself through action and dialogue. The drama sets forth the relation between destiny and character.

Descriptive literature is always accessory to one of the other kinds and its purpose is subordinate.

These various types are usually more or less blended and the teacher must treat each masterpiece according to its nature. So far as it is subjective, study it as an expression of the author's own life and character. So far as it is dramatic, study the section of life set forth and the portrayal and development of character. Treat narration and description according to their importance in the masterpiece.

CHAPTER III

Teaching a Literary Masterpiece

It must be understood that the previous outline is to aid the teacher in making her own analysis of the selection and is not a method for teaching the selection to children. The teacher's own point of view will be somewhat different from that of her class. She will study it somewhat as a critic, interested in the artist and his processes. For the teacher this will not lessen the enjoyment of the selection.

But the average grammar school or high school pupil is not interested in that. He does not wish to be conscious of the artist or any of his schemes. He wishes *to enjoy* the *thrill of* the *story*, the *vividness* and *beauty of* the *pictures*, the *clash of* the *emotions*, the *intellectual contest*, the *mystery*, the *eloquence*, and the *music*, the *triumph of right* and the *defeat of wrong*. Do not make the study of literature a study of the art of narration nor of exposition nor of anything except the *art* of *enjoying* a *masterpiece* and *absorbing its inspiration*.

When you teach high school students the art of narration use history, biography, or newspaper articles as models. When you teach exposition use scientific or political articles found in standard reference works or in good magazines. But *leave fine art literature to be taught as an inspirational interpretation of life.*

A lady who is a good dancer follows the lead of her partner, so a good teacher of literature will follow the lead of the author. Adopt the author's aim, point of view and method and cooperate with him. An

author of an artistic masterpiece never aims to teach narration, nor exposition, nor versification, nor literary criticism. He aims to reconstruct a section of life in such a way that its inspiring aspects will be evident. It is the teacher's business to assist in accomplishing this aim. If he introduces any other aims he is assuming the prerogatives of the author, killing time, stifling interest, and creating general confusion.

Literature shows the beauties of the adaptations of nature; the nobility and

romance of common life; the stress and strain and the grandeur of great historic epochs; the joy of triumph in all conditions of life—on the farm, in the shops, in the mines, in social life, in commercial life, in the inner spiritual struggle. Literature should be so taught as to interpret all these from the point of view of their greatest worth and should result in inspiring students to lay hold of the problems, duties, and opportunities of life with a more sustained zest and with more of that high seriousness of which Matthew Arnold speaks.

Reflecting on their strange meeting with the risen Savior, the Disciples exclaimed: "Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked with us by the way and while he opened to us the Scriptures?" Such must be the result of the teaching of literature. The children are to be inspired to yearn for greater revelations of truth, for deeper love; to pour out their sympathy and pity; to feel the rush of indignation and the flood of patriotic zeal, an ardent admiration for achievement, a boundless love of life, of God, of man, and of every

living creature, and a great optimistic belief in the future.

The following questions regarding Shakespeare's Macbeth are bad if occurring very frequently. They are taken from a recent book on the method of teaching English classics.

1. "Comment on the appropriateness of the first scene."

2. "Note that this scene is valuable to us because it explains the situation of affairs in the realm. It particularly sets forth the valor and the loyalty of Macbeth."

The aim of these statements is partly good, but the form is bad because it directs the interest to the author rather than to the characters. A better form would be something as follows: State the situation in the realm as set forth in this scene. Name two essential qualities of Macbeth as a general.

3. "Comment on the narrative skill shown in the sergeant's account."

Instead of asking such a question as this could we not accomplish our aim better as follows? Picture this wounded ser-

geant as he tells his story. Picture the listening king and his sons. By such suggestions make the children feel that they are part of the dramatic situation.

4. "What dramatic purpose is served by making him a wounded sergeant?"

5. "What artistic advantage is served by what Ross says."

6. "Why not have Duncan summon Cawdor to the Royal presence and there pronounce his death?"

These questions make the pupils feel that the characters are mere dummies or

parts of a machine, and that to find real life we must go back to the inventor or the machinist.

They create a critical attitude and not a sympathetic one. They stimulate the intellect rather than the imagination. They haggle and slash a piece of literature as though it had no blood and nerves and spirit. When our friends bring roses to our hospital birth, we want no pedantic botanist to tell us how he cultivated them or to tear them into pieces to tell their structure. We want some gentler atten-

dant to put them into cut glass and water them that we may enjoy their fragrance and their velvety, crimson freshness. When we are dispirited by the grind and drudgery of routine, we want no learned critic croaking about the mechanism of our beloved masterpiece. We want some gentle and sympathetic interpreter to charm our souls back to new life by her suggestive rendering and unfolding of the author's spirit. Even a good teacher of physics would arouse more interest in his machine than a teacher of literature who

asks such questions as those quoted above would stimulate in a great literary masterpiece. The teacher of physics would show how beautifully his machine would work and what it would accomplish for mankind. Avoid critical and fact questions. Such questions may occasionally be asked to advantage, but they should be rare. Ask stimulating, suggestive, interpretative questions.

And so it is expected that, in carrying out the following method, the teacher will thoroughly assimilate the masterpiece

which she has analyzed and adapt her approach to it to the interests, tastes, and experiences of her class. *Teach* the *masterpiece, adhere to its central elements*, let neither the life nor the skill of the author nor anything else divert attention from the heart of the masterpiece.

CHAPTER IV

OUTLINE FOR THE METHOD OF TEACHING A LITERARY MASTERPIECE IN UPPER GRAMMAR GRADES

A Preparation

Aims

1. To prepare the minds of the class to receive the problems of the selection with interest and with a fresh command of the general background of facts.
2. To create a sympathetic or harmonious emotional atmosphere.

II *Method*

1. When possible present the problems which the author set for himself or met in the course of producing the masterpiece. Do not try to find final solutions, but rather aim to arouse interest.

2. Put the class into possession of the facts or conditions out of which the selection was created—geography, history, nature, social conditions, religion, legendary or mythical background.

3. Discuss the author's relations to these conditions.

4. Give a suggestive forecast of the way the author has treated his problems and materials.

B Presentation

I *Aim*

1. To help children get general impressions of masterpiece—its substance, form and arrangement.

II *Method*

1. Teacher read the selection or division of it or have the class read it for themselves

a. Quality of teacher's reading important—voice, expression, personality, enthusisam, enunciation.

b. As few interruptions as possible during this reading.

2. After the reading have each child make a list of the words he cannot pronounce or of which he does not know the meaning. Teacher have a list of words on which she thinks the children will need help. Insist that children place words on left with nice margin and room at the right for a definition.

C Association and Comparison

I *Aims*

1. To guide children in selecting distinctly literary elements.
2. To lead them to treat these elements in such a manner as to enjoy them.
3. To develop in children the power to enjoy literature without the aid of a teacher.
4. To stimulate in children the wholesome, emotional and spiritual impulses, intellectual alterness, ana-

lytical power, imaginative insight and sympathy, powers of vivid perceptions, and ultimately so to develop all these that they shall dominate children's characters.

II *Method*

1. Dictionary work.

a. Have children write out from dictionary the pronunciations and meanings of words in their lists.

b. Teach class how to use guide words.

c. Have whole class look up same

word at same time. Keep records of best time and number of failures at end of certain number of seconds.

d. Help children select appropriate meanings and pronunciations.

2. Teacher and pupils together work out a topical outline.

3. By questions and suggestions help the children to understand and appreciate the characters, events, descriptions, plot with its dramatic situations, emotions, thoughts, and

the relation of each of these to the other elements. Reread brief harmonious or melodious passages to bring out beauties of style. Let class close eyes and try to form the picture while the teacher rereads vivid concrete passages. Induce class to struggle with the subtle, hidden meanings bound up in suggestive passages. Bring to bear upon this the experiences of the teacher and pupil and whatever facts were brought out under pre-

paration. Before the reader can feel the force of the author's interpretation he must see the objects and have the experiences which the author saw and had as vividly as the author realized them. Therefore one of the chief aims of the teacher is to make these experiences vivid. Call attention to the definite characteristics of the sounds, sights etc. In studying some selections, children will enjoy suggesting passages for moving picture films.

Have in mind the elements of contrast and climax as means to making experiences more vivid.

The kind of literature being studied will determine where to lay emphasis in this process. If the selection is dramatic, study character portrayal and development. If it is subjective consider it as an expression of the author's life.

Beware of overdoing this process. Here is fine opportunity for the master workman, so to touch es-

sentials that they are brought out in all their beauty and power, while minor matters are left for the pupils' own initiative.

D Recapitulation or Generalization

I *Aims*

1. To unify and strengthen general impressions.
2. To give the teacher an opportunity to test the efficiency of her work and discover any deficiencies to be repaired.
3. To arouse children's sense of re-

sponsibility for the work, that this may supplement their interest.

4. To teach children that to enjoy feelings and impulses completely they must express them.

5. To develop in children the power of accurate, easy, complete expression.

6. To develop ideals of good voice; enunciation; expression; and of graceful, pleasing, effective personality.

II *Methods*

1. Oral reproductions of incidents, descriptions, and oral explanations of problems of plot or characters. Oral quiz.

2. Oral reading by pupils.

   a. Not necessary for class to read whole selection if it is long. Select most interesting and literary parts.

   b. Before children read aloud let them read a page or two silently, to make sure that they have the content and pronunciation. Drill

them briefly on the meanings and pronunciations of the words they have looked up.

c. Have each passage attempted reread until you secure a good rendering.

d. Teacher and class criticize reading for expression, fluency, enunciation, pronunciation, voice, position. Let the test for this be—Did you enjoy the reading? If not what faults prevented it?

Make favorable as well as un-

favorable criticisms. The best way to establish the details of the ideal for good reading is to direct attention to these qualities when exemplified in the children's reading. Put the children into an appreciative attitude of mind.

e. Let child stand in front of the room and face the class; weight of body evenly distributed between the two feet; body erect, head erect so that the voice carries, book lying in one hand and leaves

turned with the other. Reader frequently look from book to audience.

f. Teacher stand in the back of the room or at the side.

g. Do not assist children in pronunciation while they are reading. Make them rely on themselves alone. Give all necessary suggestions and pronunciations before the child goes to the front to read. Sometimes it is necessary to interrupt to correct position or to

stimulate to better expression, but such interruptions should be brief.

h. In trying to get good expression avoid taking punctuation as the chief guide. Ask such questions as these—Is this an exciting passage? Did the reader make it so? Is it sad, thoughtful, happy? Did the reader bring out the proper quality? The oral reading should be an adequate expression of the appreciative interpreta-

tion developed under association. Pause, rate of reading, emphasis, quality of voice, and inflections are determined by the thought, emotion, imagination and beauty in substance and by the various elements of form of which punctuation is a very minor element.

3. Written reviews.

a. About once in five weeks.

b. Caution children about penmanship, spelling, neatness, margins and such other technical matter

as they are supposed to know about.

c. Question on appreciation of literary values, structure, characters, meanings of passages or pictures, setting etc.

E Application

It is to be observed that the processes ordinarily classed under the head of application have been dealt with already in the preceding steps. To the reflective teacher the reasons will be manifest. The underlying idea of application is to use a

general principle or power in executing a specific, concrete, practical task. The true application of the work done in literature is to be found in the life of the child. In the literature class you develop certain impulses, ideals, attitudes toward principles, tastes. It is difficult to manufacture class room opportunities for the free application of these elements of character.

Oral reading by pupils is frequently taught as the all important part of application. This makes oral reading the chief aim of teaching literature. This is

a serious fallacy, as it subordinates the far greater aim of training the impulses, imaginative insight, and aesthetic powers. Oral reading by pupils should be considered as recapitulation. Considered in this way, it is a means, not an end. It serves to fix the appreciation of the literary elements and to bring out their complete excellence. A child should not feel that he studies a selection in order to read it well, but he must read it well in order to understand and enjoy it fully.

The same fallacy is involved in teaching

oral reproduction as application. A pupil should not be taught a literary selection just as material for oral reproduction. He should reproduce it in order that he may express the impulses, imaginative element, and aesthetic enjoyment and thereby fix and intensify his appreciation of all of these. These two fallacies are to blame for much of the dislike for literature which so many children develop.

The oral and written tests might be classed as application, and yet they are not exclusively such. The aims for giving

a test are (1) that the teacher may find out what the child knows, (2) to stimulate the pupil to review thoroughly, (3) to give the pupil a final chance to express to the best of his ability the best that he has derived from studying the selection: Now number (1) is application; but (2) and (3) are recapitulation.

The great aim of teaching literature is to develop certain capacities, and the only adequate application of these is to be found in the conduct of the pupil in life. All other forms of application are of very

minor importance and are better treated under some other step.

When teaching long poems like the Lady of the Lake, we must be guarded against prolonging any one or all of these processes. It will not be best to read all of such a poem without some interpretative, explanatory, stimulating questions and statements. On the other hand it is not satisfactory to take time to interpret fully each canto before reading the next. This retards the story too much. Some teachers have found it to work successfully to take up

each of the first three or four cantos with rather thorough treatment; and then, in the remaining cantos, combine the first reading with a few brief explanations and suggestive stimulating questions. Each teacher must work out these adjustments of the scheme to suit the poem and class.

Much may be done in the preparation step that will enable us to avoid delay after the poem has been started.

CHAPTER V

Memory Gems

If literary selections are taught as memory gems in the right way, it is a good practice. If they are taught in the wrong way, the practice is vicious. The essential thing is that the child shall retain his love and respect for the selection. Use about the same method as just outlined. Have a brief review during a part of every fifth, sixth or seventh lesson. These reviews should consist of oral reading by the

teacher and pupils. Let it be understood that this should be the best oral reading done. Have oral and written reproductions of content and setting. Say very little about verbal memorizing. Do not call the selection a memory gem.

After spending ten weeks or so in this way many of the class will have the selection committed. Let them recite it, always giving first emphasis to expression and adequate interpretation. Keep verbal memorizing subordinate. Never assign the memorizing of it as a task to any child.

If some of the class are slow to get it, call on them several times to read it orally and give its content orally and make no attempt to go further. Do not feel obliged to be thorough.

CHAPTER VI

Sight Reading

Sight reading if properly done is an excellent practice. If the reader is made to feel that he is the goat whom all the class may pick at regarding some petty, pedantic technicalities, the practice had better be discontinued. If the class can be made to feel that the selection is an enjoyable one and the reader be made to feel responsible for helping the class to enjoy it, then the exercise is a very delightful one for all.

In order to accomplish such results select a good story considerably easier than the regular reading. Let the teacher give the setting and read enough of the story to interest the children. Then let the children begin to read. The teacher should place on the board all words that will give trouble. Have the class pronounce them and give their meanings after the teacher has explained them. It is well to have the children give oral or written reviews of the part of the story previously read. A few stimulating, interpretative questions

should be asked. The teacher should read occasionally. If several of the children become so interested as to read the story in advance, select a new story.

Sometimes it is well to vary the work by having the teacher read an entire story or read far enough to induce the children individually to finish it. The teacher can make this very stimulating by asking from time to time brief, suggestive questions about the probable unfolding of the plot and characters.

Humorous selections are especially well

adapted to sight reading. Don Quixote and Tom Sawyer will reclaim many a lost sheep of the sixth, seventh, and eighth grades. Is there anything equal to such books for establishing, restoring, or maintaining sympathetic relations between a teacher and her pupils? If a teacher cannot get a grip on her grade through these books, she may with reason begin to doubt her ability as a teacher.

CHAPTER VII

The Written Lesson Plan

Forward

Every lesson should be planned. This does not mean that every lesson should have the five formal steps. Perhaps two or three lessons (if you consider each recitation period the unit for one lesson) may be spent on one step. Nevertheless there must be a plan. It may exist only in the mind of the teacher, it may be written in a formal plan book; it may be written

in the margin of the text book; or it may be scattered about, one fragment here and others elsewhere. But it must exist.

The most essential element of a lesson plan is its *aim*. The most essential part of any pedagogical process is its aim. An observer or a critic must first find the aim of the lesson and estimate everything in accordance with its relation to that aim. The aim should be *worth while*. It should be *definite*. If there are several aims, they should have *unity*, *coordination*, *subordination* and logical *sequence*. In

teaching literature especially, they should be determined not by pet theories, doctrines or caprices of the teacher, but by the purposes and essential elements of the master piece. The plan book should state the aim or the aims of each of the formal steps.

The statements of aims in the previous outline are too general to be used in the plan for a specific selection. For instance, the first aim under preparation should be made definite when the method is applied to a particular selection. We ought to

state what problems the class are to be prepared to receive. In the second aim we should state with what emotions we would have them in harmony.

Under presentation we should state what general impressions we wish the children to get. In The Skeleton in Armor, it would be the primitive daring, passion, democratic independence, the strength of style, the exhilaration from the energetic movement of the story when read orally.

Under association in the teaching of The Skelton in Armor, our aims should be to

help the children get into sympathy with the viking; to enjoy his boyhood adventures; to share the sting of humiliation before the prince; to feel the bold resolution, the thrill of the daring flight, the triumph of being master of his own destiny and discovering a new land, the happiness of mutual love and sacrifice; the sadness and loneliness of the closing scene, the noble fortitude in facing danger and death, the triumph of the next life. We aim to make the pictures associated with each of the above emotions vivid in the imagina-

tions of the children and to make the qualities of style keenly appreciated.

Of course there is a limit to the fullness with which we can state our plan. After all, many details must remain in our minds. The teacher can avoid repetitions by referring to details previously stated. And finally, remember not to teach too exhaustively. Many treasures should be left to entice the children to return to do some independent mining. But some of the aims should be stated in definite detail. We must remember also that in our method

many of the details can be taught by a few masterful strokes.

Plan books should contain aim, preparation, presentation, association, and recapitulation steps.

Outline

Preparation

Under preparation step write method and matter. Under *matter* state the facts which you wish to have in the minds of your class before they read the selection. It may be that your preparation is intended to create an attitude of mind in your class.

If this is the case, state the attitude of mind and any facts used to establish it.

Under the *method* of preparation state how you wish to get your facts before the class or how you intend to arouse the desired attitude of mind. Perhaps you will do it by questioning, perhaps by illustrating or stating facts. Give sample questions or statements.

Presentation

This includes the silent reading by the children or the oral reading by the teacher and the selecting of the words from the text.

Under *method* of presentation the teacher should make an estimate of the time the class will require for silent reading. Give suggestions as to how you will conduct the process of having the children select the words from their reader.

Association

This step includes finding the meanings and pronunciations of the words, making a topical outline, and the interpretation of the selection.

Under the *matter of association* if a teacher would be strictly logical, she should

give in the plan book the definitions and pronunciations of the words listed under presentation, but in order to avoid a duplication of work, the teacher may write this out under presentation and omit it here. She should make a topical outline and show the important points to be brought out in the interpretation. The plan book should indicate here the most important pictures, suggestions, emotions, passages noted for style which the teacher wishes to treat.

Under the *method of association* state the

points to which you wish to call the attention of the children in regard to dictionary work, or the points on which you wish to take note in supervising that work —indicate the time it should take a good student to complete dictionary work. State how you intend to proceed in getting children to make a topical outline and in bringing out the points listed under matter —give sample questions, indicate the order of development, etc.

Recapitulation or Generalization

This step includes drill on words, oral reproduction of substance of selection,

general quiz on selection, oral or written examination, oral reading by children.

Under *matter of recapitulation* the plan book should refer to the list of words stated under the matter of presentation. It should refer to the outline previously given for the oral reproduction of the substance; subject matter on which you intend to quiz; the pages to be read orally by the children.

Under *method of recapitulation* the plan book should show how you intend to conduct the drill on the words; the method

by which you hope to induce or help your children to reproduce the substance of the selection, some samples of the questions for the quiz; the way in which you intend to conduct the oral reading of the children.

CHAPTER VIII

General Conclusions

The conclusion of the whole matter may be expressed in the following tests of efficiency.

a Primary Tests.

1. Ability of children to respond or react emotionally—intensity, accuracy, variety, balance, control and readiness of response.
2. Power to grasp imaginative structures and penetrative interpreta-

tions and to recall and express them —definiteness and completeness of images, arrangement and relative significance of details; depth, fullness and subtleness of penetrative insight.

b Secondary Tests.

1. Power to analyze thought.
2. Ability to understand and use the English language.

Imagination and emotion are called primary not because they are of more value than the power to analyze thought,

but because they are the elements which distinguish literature. Power to analyze thought is just as essential in history, science and mathematics, as it is in literature. The estimate of the efficiency of both child and teacher and the grading and promotion of the child should be based on these primary tests. The class tests and examinations should deal mostly with the prime details or essentials. It is the special business of the literature teacher to mature the children as rapidly and completely in emotional and imaginative powers

as the other teachers mature them in thought power. A child's progress in school should depend quite as much on his growth in powers of imagination and impulse as on the growth in powers of reason. Otherwise our schools will produce a very unsymmetrical and unbalanced product.

This is no work for a novice. If you think it is, just try to frame a set of questions to test an 8th grade child's imaginative or emotional maturity, or plan to teach a poem so as to train these powers

in an 8th grade child. It is a difficult task, yet not an impossible one. It requires method, training and experience, insight and skill. For these reasons the course in literature methods should be one of prime importance in a normal school.

If it is worth while to take time in school to develop systematically the children's generosity, sympathy, self-respect, love of ideals, loyalty to principle, to stimulate in them a hungry soul as well as a hungry mind and a hungry stomach, to make them

something better than educated swine, then let us teach literature, for this is the mission in which it can render preeminent service. But if we are unwilling to have literature taught with such aims, then let us cast it out altogether; for it has no other mission which cannot be accomplished just as well by some other subject. To claim that literature can compete with geography or science or history as an informational subject, or with mathematics or a foreign language as a reasoning subject makes the teacher a liar, enrages tax

payers, and disgusts the children. There is no sufficient reason for having it in the curriculum, if we are to treat it as an informational subject or as a means of mental discipline. Doubtless it can do much along these lines, but it is a miserable perversion to make these aims dominant.

Our Heavenly Father creates men of literary genius to inspire mortals to make the best of themselves and to get the best and the most possible out of life, to look up through drudgery and poverty, through wealth and power, through youth and old

age, through leisure and service, through nature and society, through all creation to spiritual mastery, to perfect manhood and womanhood, to complete fellowship with God. It is the mission of the teacher of literature to cooperate in this work. May the Great Father help us to be steadfast and competent. May it be our achievement that through the public school all classes of men and women shall come into the vision of the poets, shall see the beauty of holiness and the sublimity of life.

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